

Remarks

The above Amendments and these Remarks are in reply to the Office Action mailed March 4, 2005. The fee for addition of new claims is included herewith.

I. Summary of Examiner's Rejections

Prior to the Office Action mailed March 4, 2005, Claims 1, 4-11 and 14-26 were pending in the Application. In the Office Action mailed March 4, 2005, Claims 1, 4-11 and 14-26 were objected to because of various informalities. Claims 1, 5-11 and 15-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Chaar et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,960,404, hereafter Chaar). Claims 4 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chaar.

II. Summary of Applicant's Amendment

The present Response amends Claims 1, 9, 10, 11, 21 and 23; and adds new Claims 27-28 leaving for the Examiner's present consideration Claims 1, 4-11 and 14-28. Reconsideration of the Application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Applicant reserves the right to prosecute any originally presented claims in a continuing or future application.

III. Claim Objections

In the Office Action mailed March 4, 2005, Claims 1, 4-11 and 14-26 were objected to for various informalities, specifically a lack of antecedent basis for some of the claim terms. Accordingly, Claims 1, 9, 10, 11, 21 and 23 have been amended as shown in detail above. Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1, 4-11 and 14-26, as amended, now conform to the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

IV. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

In the Office Action mailed March 4, 2005, Claims 1-3, 5-13 and 15-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Chaar (U.S. Patent No. 5,960,404).

Claim 1

Claim 1 has been amended by the current Response to more clearly define the embodiment of the invention therein, and particularly to clarify the use of the terms "project" and "enterprise workflow." As amended, Claim 1 defines:

1. *(Currently Amended) A workflow integration system for a collaboration system that allows for sharing of workflow information among a plurality of collaboration participants, comprising:*

a plurality of collaboration participants;

a workflow server on each collaboration participant, and having stored thereon a participant workflow, wherein said participant workflow specifies process information for a project that is local to that collaboration participant, wherein a project is a group of related tasks;

a collaboration server having stored thereon and managing an enterprise workflow that defines combined process information for the participant workflows, and that facilitates conversations spanning those collaboration participants, wherein said enterprise workflow includes a group of tasks executed by the collaboration server across the plurality of collaboration participants to achieve a combined result; and

an integration logic that allows one of said participant workflows to interact with another participant workflow by sending messages from one collaboration participant to another via the collaboration server in accordance with the enterprise workflow, to affect the local projects running thereon.

Claim 1, as currently amended, defines a system that allows for sharing of workflow information among a plurality of collaboration participants. Each collaboration participant includes a participant workflow that specifies the workflow process information for a project that is local to that collaboration participant, wherein a project is a group of related tasks. A collaboration server includes an enterprise workflow, i.e. a group of tasks executed by the collaboration server across the plurality of collaboration participants to achieve a combined result. A participant workflow interacts with another participant workflow by sending messages from one collaboration participant to another collaboration participant via the collaboration server in accordance with the enterprise

workflow. Applicant respectfully submits that these features are not disclosed by the cited references.

The advantages of the embodiment currently defined by Claim 1 include that the system allows for inter-communication between workflows that are otherwise operating independently on individual participant machines. As the local workflows/conversations operate on each participant, they can send messages to other local workflows/conversations on other participants by sending those messages via the enterprise workflow and a conversation on the collaboration server. Because the collaboration server acts as an intermediary, neither participant needs to be aware of which business protocol the other participant uses.

Chaar discloses a mechanism for heterogeneous, peer-to-peer, and disconnected workflow operation across a network infrastructure. Chaar apparently discloses a system wherein two autonomous heterogeneous workflow systems or servers can interact by instantiating workflow scripts on each other. For example, as shown in Figure 12, a parent workflow script executing on a workflow server may contain a child workflow or a sub workflow whose script resides in the workflow template repository of a remote workflow server. (Column 12, Lines 32-38).

Applicant respectfully submits that the above description suggests that, in Chaar, the workflow on the remote server is not local to the project on remote server, but is rather a part (i.e. a sub or child) of the project on the parent workflow server.

However, in the embodiment of the invention defined by Claim 1, as currently amended, each participant workflow specifies the workflow process information for a project, i.e. a group of related tasks, that are local to that collaboration participant.

Furthermore, as disclosed in Chaar, the workflow system therein does not appear to include an enterprise workflow that includes combined process information for the participant workflows. Instead, Chaar appears to disclose a workflow with workflow requests distributed across the source and performers.

However, in the embodiment defined by Claim 1, as currently amended, the collaboration server includes an enterprise workflow that includes combined process information for the participant workflows, and facilitates conversations spanning those collaboration participants, wherein said enterprise workflow includes a group of tasks executed by the collaboration server

across the plurality of collaboration participants to achieve a combined result. Thus, a participant workflow interacts with another participant workflow by sending messages from one collaboration participant to another via the collaboration server in accordance with the enterprise workflow, to affect the local projects running thereon to affect the local projects running on those participants.

In view of the above comments, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 1 is neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

Claim 11

The comments provided above with respect to Claim 1 are hereby incorporated by reference. Claim 11 has been similarly amended to more clearly define the embodiment therein. For similar reasons as provided above with respect to Claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 11, as amended, is likewise neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

Claims 2, 3, 12 and 13

Claims 2, 3, 12 and 13 are canceled by the current Response, rendering moot the rejection of these claims.

Claims 5-10, 15-20, and 21-26

Claims 5-10, 15-20, and 21-26 are not addressed separately but it is respectfully submitted that these claims are allowable in view of the comments provided above. Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 5-10, 15-20, and 21-26 are similarly neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

It is also submitted that these claims also add their own limitations which render them patentable in their own right. Applicant reserves the right to argue these limitations should it become necessary in the future.

V. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 4 and 14

In the Office Action mailed March 04, 2005, Claims 4 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chaar.

Claims 4 and 14 are not addressed separately but it is respectfully submitted that these claims are allowable as depending from an allowable independent claim and further in view of the comments provided above. Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 4 and 14 are similarly neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of, the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

It is also submitted that these claims also add their own limitations which render them patentable in their own right. Applicant reserves the right to argue these limitations should it become necessary in the future.

VI. Additional Amendments

Claims 27-28

Claims 27-28 have been newly added by the present Response. Applicant respectfully requests that new Claims 27-28 be included in the Application and considered therewith.

VII. Conclusion


In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the Claims now pending in the subject patent application should be allowable, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested. The Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned if he can assist in any way in expediting issuance of a patent.

Application No. 09/785,862
Response to OA dated: March 04, 2005
Response/Amendment dated: May 4, 2005

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any underpayment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 06-1325 for any matter in connection with this response, including any fee for extension of time, which may be required.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: May 4, 2005

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